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ABSTRACT

After a review of the research related to the feasibility of initiating reading instruction before first grade, kindergarten curriculum guides from 13 large cities were studied and analyzed. These analyses indicated a trend toward less postponement of reading instruction, though reading readiness still tended to be defined in terms of oral language skills rather than in terms of visual skills. Most cities evaluated student progress through informal teacher assessment rather than through formal testing of specific skills. Individual and small-group instruction was stressed, although easy-to-read books and writing supplies for pupils were rarely mentioned. Only one of the 13 guides mentioned the need to adjust subsequent instruction to advances made during the kindergarten program. (Author/AA)

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF KINDERGARTEN READING CURRICULA IN THIRTEEN LARGE AMERICAN CITIES

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF

RUTGERS

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

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BY

SUSAN I. WILSON

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON: Martin Kling, Ph.D.

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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Abstract

The purposes of this study were to ascertain the evidence in the research literature regarding the feasibility of reading instruction before first grade and to determine the extent to which reading is taught early in 13 large cities volunteering such information.

This survey of the research literature began with a critique of the Morphett-Washburne studies of 1928-1930. Despite criticism of this research, the tradition of postponing reading instruction until first grade has been predominant.

In contrast to the Morphett-Washburne viewpoint, the research literature provided extensive evidence of the advantage of early reading instruction provided it is followed by an adjusted program in later years. Furthermore, according to the research literature, neither emotional problems nor visual problems were caused by early reading instruction. The Denver project of 1960-1966 and studies by Durkin from 1958-1975 offered the most thorough and long-term demonstrations of the benefits of teaching reading early.

The procedure of this study was to analyze and classify curriculum guides from 13 large cities according to the following questions:

1. To what extent is reading instruction postponed until first grade?

2. How is the child viewed in instances of delayed instruction as well as in those of early instruction?
3. How is reading readiness defined?
4. What methods of reading instruction are used?
5. What materials are used?
6. How is reading achievement evaluated?

The 13 large cities volunteering curriculum guides were as follows: Los Angeles, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Boston, Memphis, New Orleans, Phoenix, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Newark, Omaha, and Birmingham.

The findings of this analysis of kindergarten curriculum guides indicated a trend toward less postponement of reading instruction. Despite this trend, most of the guides still defined reading readiness in terms of oral language facility rather than in terms of initial visual skills.

Both the research literature and the curriculum guides showed a serious lack of specific explanation regarding satisfactory initial reading achievement and evaluation of that achievement. Most cities evaluated student progress by way of informal teacher assessment rather than by formal testing of specific skills.

A majority of the guides emphasized individual and small group instruction. This stress corresponded with the frequent use of such methods in the research literature.

One of the most striking findings of this study was that the least mentioned materials in kindergartens were easy-to-read books and writing supplies for pupil use. One concluded that kindergarteners were often discouraged from early reading merely by the absence of writing supplies and easy books.

Another significant finding was that only one city mentioned having subsequent instruction begin where previous learning stopped. The lack of stress upon adjusted program in later years is a serious omission by the other 12 cities.

To further substantiate this writer's assessments, a second person made a separate analysis of the guides in terms of the first four questions.

The primary implication of this study for further research is that future research should be very specific about what constitutes satisfactory reading readiness, early reading achievement, and reading evaluation. Finally, future research also should focus more on the importance to early reading achievement of handwriting and of later adjusted programs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

This study is designed primarily to answer two questions: first, what is the evidence in the research literature regarding the feasibility of formal teaching of reading before first grade, and, second, to what extent is reading formally taught in the kindergartens of 13 selected large American cities.

Background of the Problem

This investigation stems from a reexamination of the concept of postponement which was framed against the maturational point of view and is represented in the Morphett-Washburne studies of 1928 to 1930.

More recently, the strong early childhood focus by Piaget, Bloom and Durkin raises questions about the relative merit of formal reading instruction in kindergarten.

In spite of these two opposing points of view in the literature, this study attempts to examine the kindergarten curriculum guides of thirteen large school systems to determine the nature of kindergarten reading programs and to infer certain underlying philosophy.

Limitations

First of all, the discrepancy between stated and actual curriculum limits this study. Such discrepancy may even be greatest in the large school systems of large cities. One recognizes that the stated intentions of a curriculum guide are not necessarily reflected in the actual behavior of the classroom. However, the attempt is to evaluate only stated curriculum, not the actual content of the classroom. The varying publication dates of the curriculum guides also limit this study but again, the aim is to assess stated curriculum not actual or current curriculum.

Secondly, the nature of the sampling technique restricts this investigation. The analysis is of the curriculum guides from those large cities which volunteered such information. Such procedure is not a scientific random selection of large cities.

The content of the various curriculum guides also limits this study. One must infer from the information provided in the guides. The procedures for drawing inferences may not be sufficiently precise.

Justification

In spite of any discrepancy between stated and actual curriculum, the merit of using curriculum guides from large cities is that the larger school systems probably have a critical mass of knowledgeable people and programs

at the forefront in education and have published materials available.

In addition, despite the limitations of the sampling technique, the use of large school systems from different states representing a variety of geographic regions and size cities may well indicate some national trends.

Furthermore, restricting analysis to the content of a curriculum guide may afford a more honest indication of viewpoint than would specific replies to particular questions of a questionnaire. Statements given without prior knowledge of a question or a point of view cannot be influenced by the questioning process and presumably are more straightforward.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

Critique of the Morphett-Washburne Definition of Reading Readiness

The tradition of initiating reading instruction in first grade has been influenced greatly by the 1931 study by Mabel Morphett and Carlton Washburne. In that study, Morphett and Washburne define reading readiness as a mental age of 6.5 years. Despite the fact that data from this study deal only with one teaching method in one school system and that Gates and others reported conflicting data, the MA of 6.5 caught hold and still influences curricula.

Morphett and Washburne derived their formula for reading readiness from a 1928-29 study of first grade reading in Winnetka, Illinois. There were 141 subjects distributed among eight experienced teachers. The teachers attempted to teach all first grade students to read with a largely individual method such that the slower students would not retard the faster students.

The Morphett-Washburne study used both the Detroit First Grade Intelligence Test and the Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale to determine MA. MA scores were

calculated for September. The teachers were not given the MA scores.

Reading progress was measured in February of 1929. All eight teachers agreed that those children ready for reading in September usually had mastered 13 steps and 37 sight words by February; therefore, 13 steps and 37 sight words became the minimum standard for satisfactory reading progress. The observations of the teachers regarding students ready for reading in September may indicate teacher bias toward certain students.

The 13 steps were part of a total of 21 steps comprising the beginning reading material prerequisite for the primer or first reader. The 37 sight words were part of a total of 139, the knowledge of which was necessary in order to pass from the first to the second grade in Winnetka. There may have been some correspondence between the pressure to teach a child a certain number of sight words before he could pass to the second grade and the Winnetka method of teaching reading which seemed to be more effective with children having mental ages of 6.5 or more.

The researchers computed correlations between reading progress steps and MA as well as between sight word scores and MA. A statistically significant correlation between reading progress steps and MA was .59 on the Detroit test and .51 on the Stanford test; the correlation between sight word scores and MA was .65 on the Detroit test and .58 on the Stanford test. Table 1 shows these relationships.

TABLE 1

CORRELATION REPORTED BETWEEN READING ACHIEVEMENT AND MA

Test	Reading Progress Steps and MA	Sight Word Scores and MA
Detroit First Grade Intelligence Test	.59	.65
Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale	.51	.58

Note--Data obtained from Morphett and Washburne, 1931.

One way of interpreting correlations is to square them to obtain an estimate of the amount of overlapping variance between the two measures. For example, the amount of overlap between reading progress steps and MA is approximately 35 percent on the Detroit test and 26 percent on the Stanford test. These calculations indicate that 65 to 74 percent of the relationship between reading progress steps and MA is not accounted for. Likewise, 58 to 66 percent of the overlap between sight word scores and MA is not explained by the correlations obtained by Morphett and Washburne.

Morphett and Washburne state a preference for the Detroit scores over the Stanford scores because the Detroit test shows the greatest correlation with reading achievement and is more easily administered. However, the Detroit scores may be favored because they support the researchers' preconception about when to initiate reading instruction.

As demonstrated by Table 2, both Detroit and Stanford scores indicate a noticeable increase in reading progress at the MA interval of 6.6-6.11. Detroit scores indicate that 78 percent of the subjects obtained a satisfactory reading level between the mental age of 6.6 and 6.11 which suggests initiating reading instruction at that interval. Although Stanford scores show that 68 percent of the subjects achieve satisfactory reading at the 6.6-6.11 interval, Stanford scores also indicate that 87 percent of the subjects obtain satisfactory reading level at the later MA interval of 7.6-7.11 which suggests delaying reading

TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN HAVING SATISFACTORY READING ACHIEVEMENT

MA in years and months	Reading Progress Steps		Sight Word Scores	
	Detroit Scores	Stanford Scores	Detroit Scores	Stanford Scores
4.5-4.11	-	-	-	-
5.0-5.5	0	-	0	-
5.6-5.11	0	8	0	8
6.0-6.5	47	41	71	52
6.6-6.11	78	68	87	77
7.0-7.5	79	68	84	89
7.6-7.11	75	87	83	94
8.0-8.5	-	82	90	91
8.6-9.0	-	-	100	-

Note--Data obtained from Morphett and Washburne, 1931.

instruction until that time.

From the information represented in Table 2, Morphett and Washburne conclude that reading instruction should be postponed until the child has reached the mental age of 6.6. These researchers argue that with children of 6.6 MA obtained from the Detroit test, the teacher can expect from 78 to 87 percent of the students to make satisfactory reading achievement in either reading progress steps or sight words scores. Morphett and Washburne believe that there is little value in delaying the teaching of reading past the MA of 6.6 years because after that time reading achievement begins to level off or decrease.

Morphett and Washburne conducted a similar study in 1929-30 to verify the results of their 1928-29 research. The procedures, findings and conclusions are much like the earlier project except for the following: only those students with mental ages of six or more were taught reading from the beginning of the year, as opposed to attempting to teach all first grade students as was done in the former study.

The omission of reading instruction for those with younger mental ages makes it impossible to conclude that one certain MA is ideally suited to beginning reading. If reading instruction is given only to children with a certain MA, it will not be possible to know whether students with another MA can be taught to read.

The Morphett-Washburne study has many weaknesses. Most of these faults can be summarized by saying that the Morphett and Washburne studies have been interpreted in causal terms. Many practitioners assume that correlation is causality.

A second major shortcoming of the Morphett-Washburne study is that since it represents one locale at one time, the sample is too limited to support the sweeping generalization favoring postponement of reading instruction for all children in all places and times.

Morphett and Washburne are not totally responsible for the excessive popularity of their formula. Rather, even now, practitioners who assume causality and who generalize from one study at one time to all children everywhere may be committing the same error of overgeneralization.

Why has this particular definition of reading readiness been so widespread? Its initial popularity was probably due to the prevailing climate of opinion of that time and also because Washburne was very prominent in the educational field at that time. In the 1920's and 1930's, the prevailing climate of opinion was dominated by G. Stanley Hall and later his student, Arnold Gesell, who stressed heredity and maturation rather than learning and practice. The ideas of Hall and Gesell were so pervasive that inadequate achievement in reading was explained solely by the child's not having reached the proper stage of development. The solution was to wait, to postpone instruction until the

child matured and was ready for it (Durkin, 1970).

The launching of Sputnik altered the climate of opinion and since then a questioning of the traditional time to initiate reading instruction has begun.

Changes in the Climate of Opinion

A more widespread interest in early-school or even pre-school reading instruction developed during the 1960's. The one event that probably fostered that interest more than any other single event was the launching by the Soviet Union of Sputnik I on October 4, 1957. That event aroused in the minds of both lay and professional people a concern that schools in the United States were not teaching enough or well enough or early enough. The launching of Sputnik I did not create an interest in early reading so much as it fostered a climate of opinion which allowed for positive emphasis upon early learning. As previously mentioned, the prevailing philosophy of education had been strongly influenced by the viewpoint of postponement of instruction until the proper moment of maturation.

The work of certain "cognitive" psychologists which came to the forefront at that time also contributed to the 1960's concern with early learning. The work of Jean Piaget, published in French since the 1930's, was translated into English after the late 1950's. Books by Jerome S. Bruner and by Joseph McVicker Hunt began to

appear in the 1960's. The work of these psychologists focuses upon the possibilities as well as the values of learning which occurs before the ages of four or five. In addition, Benjamin S. Bloom's Stability and Change in Human Characteristics (1964) stresses both that the most rapid period for the development of many characteristics including intelligence is in the first four years and that the effects of the environment are the greatest in the early periods of rapid growth.

Another source of interest in early learning was the focus during the 1960's upon the problems of the poor, the economically disadvantaged. This concern found expression in programs such as Headstart which aim to provide learning experiences during the pre-school years so that disadvantaged children might "catch up" with children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Here can be seen the influence of thinking by persons such as Bloom and Bruner who stress that the environment is of more importance before the age of four than afterwards. Although large-scale programs such as Headstart have not shown conclusive positive results, the fact that a number of small-scale programs have succeeded continues to give impetus to pre-school programs for educating the disadvantaged (Rohwer, 1971).

A third source of interest in pre-school reading has come, in fact, from the very existence of successful pre-school programs of education. One of these has been the

revival of the Montessori method in the United States with the establishment of the Whitby School in 1958. There are now about 200 Montessori schools as well as many more which use a modified form of the Montessori method (Aukerman, 1971).

Durkin's Studies

In 1958, Delores Durkin began what has become an important series of studies of early readers. Significantly, her studies have been longitudinal. The first survey developed in Oakland, California, covered the span 1958-1964; the second was in New York City between 1961 and 1964. These longitudinal studies of children who learned to read at home before first grade indicate that the early readers maintained their lead for as long as six school years over comparably bright children who did not learn to read until first grade. About 24 percent of Durkin's subjects were double promoted at least once during the span of the study (Durkin, 1966). Therefore, in some cases, the advantages of an early start in reading were followed by an adjusted program in later schooling.

The sample of early readers in Durkin's studies was small, 1-4 percent out of a total population of four to five thousand children. However, these subjects were followed for a number of years and were analyzed in a variety of ways. One surprising finding is that the early reader is not necessarily bright nor is he necessarily from the

upper middle class or above. The range of IQ for these subjects was between 82 and 170. Approximately 60 to 85 percent of the early readers were from the lower middle class and below. The California study prompted Durkin to suggest that the less bright child is especially aided by an early start in reading since that gives him more time to learn the necessary skills (Durkin, 1966).

Another finding from Durkin's research has to do with what makes the difference between an early and a non-early reader. Given a child's early interest in learning to read, the actual learning depended upon whether someone merely would answer his questions about letters and words. Some parents were fearful about not having the proper training to "teach" reading and, therefore, avoided answering and were not encouraging. In other cases, parents or siblings answered the child's questions and were encouraging. The early readers came from this latter group (Durkin, 1966).

Important among Durkin's later research has been a language arts program for four- and five-year olds. Approximately 40 children from varying socioeconomic backgrounds were enrolled in this two-year, pre-first grade program. Ninety-two percent of the subjects were from the lower middle class or below. The mean IQ for the group was 113.6 with a standard deviation of 12.5. At the time of the testing, the highest mental age was 5 years,

11 months. Therefore, at the start of this program, none of these children had reached the 6.5 mental age level (Durkin, 1974-75).

Durkin's language arts experiment with four- and five-year olds was a natural outgrowth of the longitudinal research with early readers. What was learned previously about how children learned to read naturally at home was used to devise this language arts program. This curriculum stresses exposure to words in everyday surroundings and begins with four-year olds since Durkin had noticed that was the usual age at which the early reader first showed an interest in written language. Based upon her previous research, Durkin's language arts program has five primary characteristics: (1) equal attention to writing, (2) no published materials but rather the use of vocabulary closely related to the child and his current circumstances, (3) the whole-word approach, (4) a focus on letters and numerals in the child's everyday surroundings, (5) reading to and talking with the child daily (Durkin, 1974-75).

By the end of the kindergarten year, results from this pre-first grade language arts program indicated that 82 percent of the subjects could identify the entire alphabet and that each subject knew an average of 125.4 words and that each subject knew 70 percent of the 22 sounds comprising the sound test (5 short vowel and 17 consonant sounds). Durkin found that chronological age was not one of the factors affecting achievement (Durkin,

1974-75).

The reading progress of these experimental subjects was followed and analyzed through grade four. During grades one through four, the mean raw reading scores were always higher for the experimental group than for the control subjects. The differences were of statistical significance for grades one and two but not for grades three and four. Durkin found that neither sex nor chronological age was a significant factor affecting achievement in reading (Durkin, 1974-75).

From this language arts experiment with four- and five-year olds, Durkin concluded that even with subjects not formally selected as being "ready" to read, earlier starts in reading lead to satisfactory accomplishments and not to problems. Durkin also observed that much higher achievement would have been likely if the earlier starts in reading had been taken advantage of in later instruction. Throughout this study, Durkin found that subsequent instruction characteristically ignored the previous achievements of the children. In one instance, a group of third grade superior readers completed three different second-level third grade texts before a fourth grade text was finally distributed (Durkin, 1974-75).

Denver Project

Paul McKee, Joseph Brzeinski and others made the most extensive study involving reading instruction before first

grade. This study took place in Denver, Colorado, between 1960 and 1966. The Denver experiment proposed to study the effectiveness of beginning reading instruction in kindergarten. The Denver group felt that many researchers had already demonstrated that children could be taught to read early but that it was not clear to what extent early readers maintained their lead over equally bright non-early readers.

The Denver sample consisted of 4,000 students divided into four groups. Group I received the regular program in kindergarten and subsequent grades. Group II received the regular program in kindergarten but an adjusted program in later grades. The adjusted program comprised the use of the pilot reading program plus the acceleration of the reading program of pupils working at advanced levels. Group III received reading instruction in kindergarten but the regular program in first and later grades. Group IV, the true experimental group, received reading instruction in kindergarten along with an adjusted program in later grades. The progress of all groups was followed from kindergarten through grade five.

The Denver group observed no visual or psychological problems due to an earlier start in reading. Instead, they found, as had Durkin, that earlier starts in reading lead to satisfactory accomplishments.

The Denver study demonstrates that students taught to read in kindergarten have significantly higher reading

achievement scores than those taught to read in first grade even when those taught in first grade have an adjusted program in later grades. The research also indicates that statistically significant gains in reading achievement lasted throughout the grades when the advantages of an early start in reading were followed by the adjusted program. However, without the adjusted program in later grades, the measurable advantages of kindergarten reading instruction did not persist beyond second grade (McKee et al., 1966).

Studies Prior to 1958

One can find little published material before 1958 which deals with the early teaching of reading. The following paragraph briefly summarizes this early research.

The first instance is that of a parent who taught his twenty-six month old daughter to read (Anonymous, 1918). Brown (1924) describes teaching reading to fifteen children who ranged in age between two and five years. Davidson (1931) taught reading to thirteen children between the ages of three and five years. Wilson (1938) recounts a four year study at the Horace Mann School in which four and five year olds were taught to read. Roslow (1940) reports teaching reading to children with mental ages less than six years. Keister (1941) describes teaching five-year old children to read. Finally, in Scotland, reading instruction is regularly begun with five-year olds. Reported

results are conflicting. Some studies say that Scottish children read significantly better than American or English children (Committee of Reading, 1950). Other reports indicate that Scottish children taught to read at age five read no better than those taught at age six (Vernon, 1955).

Studies Since 1958

Since 1958 there has been further research on the feasibility of early reading instruction in addition to Durkin and the Denver Project mentioned above. Generalities are difficult to draw because of wide variations in research design but the following research does indicate the feasibility of early instruction.

Moore (1964) has taught reading to hundreds of children between the ages of two and six by using a typewriter electronically programmed to teach them to read, spell and write. He claims that children who have been in his "Responsive Environment" program for two years, including kindergarten, usually can read at the beginning sixth grade level by the end of the first grade. At least one critic points out that Moore's subjects are usually of above average intelligence and that Lessar Gotkin using the computerized typewriter with subjects from Harlem did not have such great success (Fry, 1968). Nevertheless, Moore's experiments at least point out that adjusted programs are both possible and necessary for those children ready to read before first grade.

Anderson (1960) reports that four-year olds of varying mental ability profit from early formal reading instruction.

Bacci (1961) describes one school system's use of reading instruction in kindergarten.

Appleton (1964) conducted a study with kindergarteners in which interested children were given the opportunity to learn to read. Most children chose to take part in the reading program and all of those made progress in reading ability.

Kelley (1967) compared two groups of kindergarteners, one with formal reading instruction and the other with traditional readiness instruction. End of year testing indicated superior reading achievement for the group which had the formal reading program.

McManus (1964) replicated a Denver study regarding the effectiveness of parents assisting their children with early reading. The researcher found that parents could help significantly in teaching their children to read at an early age.

Plessas and Oakes (1964) surveyed twenty-two kindergarten classes in a California school system and found twenty children already able to read. According to the parents, their children had been taught to read by someone, usually a parent or sibling. Although these children were of superior intelligence, it is important to stress that specific teaching, not chance, had made them early readers.

Hillerich (1965) reports that children taught to read in kindergarten were better readers at the end of first grade than children introduced to reading in first grade.

Smith (1967) compared the reading achievement in a New Jersey school system between children with and without kindergarten. She found no significant difference between children with and without kindergarten experience. However, it must be noted that this particular kindergarten program contained no instruction in reading and that, at the time, New Jersey State Board Standards for Kindergartens forbade the teaching of reading in kindergarten. According to Mountain (1966), no other states have had such a ruling.

La Conte (1968) surveyed the opinions and practices of New Jersey and Connecticut kindergarten teachers. At that time the New Jersey State Board Standards still forbade teaching reading before first grade. In 1969 the Code was changed to allow for teaching reading in kindergarten. Nevertheless, among the New Jersey teachers, La Conte found that 57 percent claimed to be teaching reading and that 32 percent claimed to be teaching reading regularly.

Bender (1968) made four studies over five semesters of machine-taught reading to disadvantaged four-year olds. The results indicated superior achievement for those subjects given reading instruction. There was no significant difference between subjects in the one-hour and those in the three-hour sessions.

Carl Bereiter, Siegfried Engelmann and Elaine C. Bruner collaborated to formulate a systematic program for teaching reading to disadvantaged children in preschool.

The program is called DISTAR. Among the few published research findings on DISTAR is a study by Karnes (February, 1968) comparing five pre-school programs. Karnes found that the DISTAR group made startling gains in IQ, ITPA scores, as well as reading and arithmetic achievement scores.

Sutton (1969) discovered significant relationship between third grade reading ability and reading achievement acquired in kindergarten. Over a hundred kindergarteners were given the opportunity to learn to read. By the end of kindergarten, 46 children achieved a reading grade level of 1.3. These early readers were still ahead at the end of third grade. One must note that these early readers were brighter than the other subjects. However, it is equally important to stress that adjusted programs are both possible and necessary for those children ready to read before first grade.

McKee (1966) cites Schoephoerster and others as having found that a formal kindergarten readiness program including pupil use of workbooks benefited children's reading achievement more than an informal readiness program without pupil use of workbooks.

Halasa (1970) compared an enrichment-oriented kindergarten with an instruction-oriented kindergarten. Halasa ascertained that direct instruction was more effective in fostering reading achievement. One year later, the direct instruction group was still ahead in reading.

Niedermeyer (1970) compared parent-assisted kindergarteners learning to read with those not receiving parental help at home. Sixty-six percent of the pupils in the parent-assisted program scored at or above 80 percent on the post test whereas only 15 to 19 percent of those in the non-parent-assisted group scored at or above 80 percent.

Summary

From the preceding survey, it is clear that sufficient evidence does exist that children can be taught to read before first grade and that the early learners maintain their lead over comparable youngsters taught at later ages. Durkin's research and the Denver project provide the most complete evidence of the success of early formal training in reading. However, the numerous smaller studies dating from 1918 to the present also indicate the feasibility of early reading instruction.

This review of literature demonstrates that where reading is taught at an early age, instruction is not impeded by the traditional oral language definition of reading readiness, but rather a situation is provided in which children are taught initial visual skills. Durkin found that, given a child's interest in reading, the actual learning depended primarily upon whether someone answered his questions about letters and words. Durkin's pre-first grade language arts program highlighted the

letters and words in the child's everyday surroundings.

The literature search also shows the lack of agreement upon what is satisfactory reading achievement at a beginning level. Morphett and Washburne refer to 13 of 21 steps prerequisite to primer level and to 37 of 139 sight words necessary in order to pass from first to second grade. Durkin refers to the identification of the entire alphabet and the knowledge of an average of 125.4 words. However, most studies are noticeably lacking in specific explanations of what is meant by satisfactory reading progress.

In addition, the literature survey indicates the need for distinctly different materials and methods for younger learners than those traditionally used with first graders. Durkin's pre-first grade language arts program does not use published materials but rather the vocabulary closely related to the child and his circumstances. The Denver study emphasizes the need for the adjusted program in later grades if early learners are to maintain their advantage. Moore uses an electronically programmed typewriter to teach reading to very young children. The DISTAR program uses a highly concentrated and structured teaching method with absolute directions for the teacher and absolute acceptable answers by the student. Finally, in many smaller studies, the children are taught in small groups or individually.

However, from these various studies reported, it is difficult to obtain an accurate understanding of the

particular, definitive methods and materials used in the actual early formal instruction in reading before the first grade.

Despite the foregoing weaknesses, the research does indicate the possibility and advantage of early teaching of reading. Yet no study could be found which examined whether the evidence cited in the research literature has been utilized in actual pre-first grade curriculum. Therefore the intention of this study is to bridge that gap by a content analysis of kindergarten curriculum guides from thirteen large American cities.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This section describes the procedure by which kindergarten curriculum guides from thirteen large American cities were selected and examined to infer the nature of pre-first grade reading instruction.

Selection of Cities

From the 1970 United States Census of cities ranked by size, the 25 largest cities were selected, allowing for no state to be represented more than once and with the exclusion of New York City and of Denver, Colorado. New York City was eliminated because its population is so much greater than the next largest cities. Denver was not included because its kindergarten reading program is widely publicized and was described in Chapter II of this thesis.

Sampling of Cities

In May of 1973, letters requesting kindergarten curriculum guides were sent to the boards of education in each of these 25 cities. Thirteen cities replied by sending curriculum guides or sufficient information.

Table 3 summarizes the rank and size of the cities selected and indicates those which responded with sufficient curriculum information. This table also gives the geographic region for each city. The four different regions used are those delineated by the 1970 United States census reports: the northeast, the north central, the south and the west.

Cities which volunteered curriculum information represent a variety of regions of the country as well as a variety of sizes of cities. However, more responses were received from southern cities than from those of other regions and most of the cities range in size from one third to one half million persons.

Organization of the Analysis of the Curriculum Guides

The curriculum guides received were analyzed with the following questions in mind:

1. To what extent is reading instruction postponed until first grade?
2. How is the child viewed in instances of delayed instruction as well as in those of early instruction?
3. How is reading readiness defined?
4. What methods of reading instruction are used?
5. What materials are used?
6. How is reading achievement evaluated?

TABLE 3

CITIES SELECTED AND PROVIDING KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM GUIDES, 1973

Cities Responding			Cities Not Responding		
Geographic Region		1970 Population	Geographic Region		1970 Population
W	Los Angeles, Calif.	2,816,061	NC	Chicago, Ill.	3,366,357
NC	Detroit, Mich.	1,511,482	NE	Philadelphia, Pa.	1,948,609
S	Houston, Tex.	1,232,802	S	Baltimore, Md.	905,759
NC	Indianapolis, Ind.	744,624	NC	Cleveland, Ohio	750,903
NE	Boston, Mass.	641,071	NC	Milwaukee, Wisc.	717,099
S	Memphis, Tenn.	623,530	NC	St. Louis, Mo.	622,236
S	New Orleans, La.	593,471	W	Seattle, Wash.	530,831
W	Phoenix, Ariz.	581,562	NE	Buffalo, N.Y.	462,768
S	Jacksonville, Fla.	528,865	NC	Minneapolis, Minn.	434,400
S	Atlanta, Ga.	496,973	W	Portland, Ore.	382,619
NE	Newark, N.J.	382,417	S	Oklahoma City, Okla.	366,481
NC	Omaha, Nebr.	347,328	S	Louisville, Ky.	361,472
S	Birmingham, Ala.	300,910			

Note--The geographic regions are abbreviated as follows: NE for northeast, NC for north central, S for south, and W for west.

Each of the curriculum guides was scrutinized for statements pertaining to any of the above questions. Then all statements relevant to any one question were listed, summarized, and analyzed in narrative form. This same process was used for each of the six questions.

To substantiate these assessments, a second person made a separate analysis of the guides in terms of the first four questions regarding postponement, view of the child, definition of reading readiness, and methods of instruction. The second evaluator did not analyze materials of instruction or evaluative procedure because these judgments are more obvious and factual rather than matters of interpretation. This second judge was Dr. Florence E. Mooney, a Specialist in Reading and an Assistant Professor at Monmouth College in West Long Branch, New Jersey.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Postponement of Instruction

All of the curriculum guides were analyzed to infer the extent to which reading instruction is postponed and the material was classified accordingly. Five categories were established: entire-postponement, transition from entire-postponement, partial-postponement, transition toward no-postponement, and no-postponement. Partial-postponement is defined as provision for some initial reading instruction without giving any students full reading instruction. The two transition categories were established for viewpoints containing contradictory statements and therefore difficult to label accurately. Such discrepancy is regarded as indication of recent shifts in philosophy.

Two cities--Omaha and Birmingham--were classified as representing entire-postponement. Three cities--Houston, Memphis, and Atlanta--were labeled as transition away from entire-postponement. Therefore, loosely defined, five cities could be categorized as entire-postponement. Only one city--Indianapolis--was classified as partial-postponement. Four of the cities--Los Angeles, Detroit,

Boston, and Newark--were labeled as transition toward no-postponement. The three cities classified as having no-postponement used the SWRL program (see Appendix A, 9). Table 4 categorizes the cities to reflect the five levels of postponement as classified by both judges.

In order to document the preceding generalizations, concise quotations or paraphrases are given at pertinent points within the text and Appendix A provides complete quotations of relevant material.

The Omaha and Birmingham guides were placed within the category of entire-postponement. These guides describe the most traditional form of reading readiness program with stress exclusively upon oral communication and auditory discrimination. The Omaha guide considers "language development through listening and talking" and assumes success in reading is dependent upon "facility with oral language" (Omaha, pp. 41, 55; see also Appendix A, 1). The Birmingham guide describes the intellectual objectives of its kindergarten program as developing concepts for "thinking, understanding, and verbalizing" and also as developing "communication skills (language development)" (Birmingham, 1972, p. 3; see also Appendix A, 2). The Omaha guide clearly states that "formal reading should begin in the first grade" as soon as a child demonstrates that he can profit from the instruction (Omaha, p. 49). The Birmingham guide never mentions formal reading instruction at all. Therefore, one assumes no recognition by Birmingham of

TABLE 4

LEVELS OF POSTPONEMENT OF INSTRUCTION

Categories	Cities as classified by	
	Judge 1 (author)	Judge 2
Entire-Postponement	Omaha, Birmingham	Houston, Indianapolis, Birmingham
Transition from Entire-Postponement	Houston, Memphis, Atlanta	Boston, Memphis, Atlanta, Omaha
Partial-Postponement	Indianapolis	(none so classified)
Transition toward No-Postponement	Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, Newark	Los Angeles
No-Postponement	New Orleans, Jacksonville, Phoenix District 1	Detroit, New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville, Newark

Note--The three cities using SWRL were as follows: New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, and Jacksonville.

even the possibility of early reading instruction. The Omaha guide acknowledges the possibility of early formal reading training but considers such programs as productive of "only minimum results and often failure" as well as "emotional problems and reading difficulties" (Omaha, pp. 53, 60; see Appendix A, 3).

Houston, Memphis, and Atlanta were labeled as exhibiting transition away from entire-postponement. All three cities employ traditional programs of reading readiness but also acknowledge allowing some children early reading instruction. The writers of these guides indicate growing awareness that some children can be taught successfully to read earlier and that the school should make provision for these individual differences. In Houston, the kindergarten program stresses listening and speaking skills and makes no allowance for the formal teaching of reading. However, the skill of an early reader is acknowledged though not overemphasized before classmates (Houston, 1967, pp. 80, 93). In Memphis, the kindergarten curriculum also stresses developing language skills without formal reading instruction. Nevertheless, formal training in reading is allowed for a few children deemed ready, provided the supervising teacher approves (Memphis, 1972, p. 33; see Appendix A, 4). Atlanta kindergartens recognize that reading can be taught early but feel that the early reader often lacks adequate comprehension of and interest in reading (Atlanta, 1971, pp. 89-90; see Appendix A, 5).

The Indianapolis guide alone was classified as partial-postponement, that is, provision for some and only some initial reading training. The Indianapolis guide defines reading readiness as including recognition and also reproduction of letters and words (see Appendix A, 6). This guide acknowledges that "some, but not all, kindergarten children are ready and interested in printing their names, labels, and other words [Indianapolis, 1970, p. 116]." In addition, this guide stresses "informal instruction in all subject areas and in both individual and group situations . . . [Indianapolis, 1970, p. 130]." One assumes that the use of informal and individual instruction would facilitate both interest and learning of skills.

The guides from Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, and Newark were classified as transition toward no-postponement. Los Angeles, Detroit, and Newark clearly indicate willingness to provide beginning reading instruction for children who are ready (see Appendix A, 7). In Detroit, the kindergarten year is part of an ungraded primary unit. The Detroit guide stresses having subsequent instruction begin where previous achievement left off and also acknowledges a recent shift toward some formal instruction in kindergarten, including some experimentation with the SWRL program (E. W. McDaid, personal communication, June 11, 1973). In Boston, kindergarten is a two year program for four- and five-year olds. In Kindergarten II which is for five-year olds, much stress is put upon letter recognition skills for

all pupils (see Appendix A, 8).

Those cities classified as having no-postponement of reading instruction were the three using the SWRL program which consists of direct teaching of basic reading skills as well as periodic evaluation of achievement (see Appendix A, 9). New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, and Jacksonville reported the exclusive use of SWRL.

In summary, two cities--Omaha and Birmingham--entirely delay formal reading instruction. Three cities --Houston, Memphis, and Atlanta--seem in transition toward allowing some children an earlier start in reading. One city--Indianapolis--partially delays beginning reading. Four cities--Los Angeles, Detroit, Boston, and Newark--indicate willingness to provide ready children with formal reading instruction. Three cities--New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, and Jacksonville--actually provide direct reading instruction for all kindergarteners through the use of SWRL.

If the last two categories are considered together, one can say that seven guides represent no-postponement. Thus, of the 13 cities, a little more than half favor little or no-postponement. Moreover, if both transition categories are considered together, one can say that a little more than half of the cities are in transition away from postponement.

How the Child Is Viewed

Each curriculum guide was examined to infer the underlying philosophy of the child, either interventional or maturational. On the one hand, the interventional viewpoint was defined as recognizing that the child possesses a certain level of language proficiency as a result of previous opportunities for learning and as assessing readiness for reading by actual engagement in the process of early instruction.

On the other hand, the maturational position was defined as considering children too young to begin reading instruction before a certain age or developmental stage. In this case, one assumes that reading instruction will be delayed until the proper time. There will be no real need to assess individual readiness, formally or informally. One only needs to wait. However, those people who favor postponement probably will use standardized reading readiness tests but not before first grade so as to avoid identifying "ready" subjects younger than first grade.

The various curriculum guides were given a rating of one to five according to how the child is viewed. The rating of one corresponds with influence by the maturational viewpoint primarily. The rating of two indicates transition from influence by the maturational position toward a balanced interaction between maturation and intervention. The rating of three signifies a fairly balanced

interaction between maturation and intervention. The rating of four is used for transition toward the interventional stance as primary. The rating of five means influence chiefly by interventional philosophy. Table 5 lists these five categories and the cities assigned to each by the two judges.

It was not possible to accurately assess the Birmingham guide's perspective on the child since that guide omits information regarding its philosophy of the child or of kindergarten education.

Of the remaining twelve guides, two were given a rating of one: Detroit and Omaha. One city was assigned a rating of two: Houston. Three cities were given a rating of three: Los Angeles, Memphis, and Atlanta. Three cities were given a rating of four: Indianapolis, Boston, and Newark. Three cities were assigned a rating of five: New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, and Jacksonville.

The Detroit and Omaha guides were written by people who apparently view the child from the position of maturation primarily. The Detroit guide indicates that interest in reading is dependent upon maturity and ability (Detroit, 1970, p. 9). These writers say that children progress according to their ability and they describe those children ready for advanced work as "mature" (Detroit, 1970, pp. 5, 10). In the Detroit guide, the

TABLE 5

HOW THE CHILD IS VIEWED: MATURATION VERSUS INTERVENTION

Viewpoints	Cities as classified by	
	Judge 1 (author)	Judge 2
Maturational	Detroit, Omaha	Los Angeles
Transition away from Maturational	Houston	Boston, Omaha
Interaction between Maturation and Intervention	Los Angeles, Memphis, Atlanta	Houston, Memphis, New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville
Transition toward Interventional	Indianapolis, Boston, Newark	Atlanta
Interventional	New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville	Detroit, Indianapolis, Newark

Note--Birmingham is not listed here because of insufficient information.

child's age is the first mentioned consideration when deciding whether to promote to grade three (Detroit, 1970, p. 6). The Omaha guide refers to a particular sequence of developmental stages, to certain times for specific learning and to key factors in readiness which cannot be accelerated, for example, mental age (Omaha, pp. 53-54). The Omaha guide also states that emotional and reading difficulties occur if children are taught to read too early (Omaha, p. 60).

The compilers of the Houston guide indicate a position of transition away from the maturational toward the interventional point of view. This guide speaks of growth potential and stresses a readiness program of listening and speaking skills basic to first grade (Houston, 1967, pp. 7, 13, 80). At the same time, this guide acknowledges that "some pupils enter kindergarten already knowing how to read . . . However, this skill should not be overemphasized before classmates [Houston, 1967, p. 93]."

Those guides from Los Angeles, Memphis, and Atlanta acknowledge an interdependence between maturation and intervention. Although the Los Angeles guide recognizes such interdependence, nevertheless, this guide seems to stress the interventional viewpoint. The kindergarten child is regarded as already possessing certain language

proficiency as a result of prior experiences and situations. The Los Angeles writers say, "each child differs from others in relation to his abilities, knowledge, background, and interests and . . . he will respond differently to the experiences and materials provided [Los Angeles, 1970, p. 26]."

The Memphis guide refers to the child as a product of his ability, maturity, and background, influencing interdependently (Memphis, 1972, pp. 4, 6). The Atlanta guide describes the child as influenced by a constant interaction of many factors: heredity, background of experience, economic stability of the family, nutrition, and language development (Atlanta, 1971, p. 42). The Atlanta guide expresses the conflicting viewpoints that there is a specific time to begin reading instruction and that experience and training can sharpen sensory perceptual skills (Atlanta, 1971, pp. 6, 89). Such conflicting statements belie recent transition away from the maturational stance toward the interventional position.

Three guides, those from Indianapolis, Boston, and Newark, seem to be in transition toward the interventional point of view. The Indianapolis guide recognizes the importance of the early childhood years as the time of most rapid growth and of greatest susceptibility to intervention (Indianapolis, 1970, p. 1). The writers

of this guide acknowledge that some kindergarten children are ready to read and write a few words (Indianapolis, 1970, pp. 116, 130). The Boston curriculum guide refers to the child as a product of environmental influences and regards its kindergarten program as stimulating of the child's maturity and intellect (Boston, 1969, pp. 15, 90). At the same time, the Boston guide indicates that "can" teach reading early does not necessarily mean "should" do so. An emphatic distinction is made between "the ability to learn to read and the desire to read to learn [Boston, 1969, p. 49]." Again such conflicting viewpoints within the same curriculum guide probably indicate transition from one philosophy to another. Since stress upon intervention is the more recent philosophy, one presumes transition in this direction. The Newark guide describes each child as unique and possessing varied information based upon previous life experiences (Newark, E.C.E., 1971, pp. 3, 30). Newark asserts the need for an earlier start in reading and indicates a willingness to teach reading to kindergarteners who demonstrate readiness (Newark, R.C., 1971, pp. 3, 7).

The three cities using the SWRL program in their kindergartens are interventionists primarily. Therefore, they engage all kindergarten children in the process of beginning to read. The following quotation from correspondence with Phoenix District 1 seems to speak for

all the users of SWRL:

> Our kindergarteners are academically oriented since we feel that five-year-old children are being denied an opportunity to begin the school learning process with a "sand box/graham cracker" curriculum (M. Atteberry, personal communication, June 11, 1973).

This letter also indicates that about three-fourths of the Phoenix kindergarteners enter first grade reading at pre-primer or primer level and that the first grade curriculum is restructured to accommodate such changes.

In summary, two of the three cities--Houston and Omaha--which regard the child from a maturational viewpoint do also favor postponement of formal reading instruction. All six of the cities favoring intervention do also prefer earlier starts in formal reading. Of these six, Indianapolis is not as emphatically for earlier reading as are the others and had been labeled as partial-postponement. The three cities which viewed the child in terms of the interaction between maturation and intervention had been labeled as in transition away from entire or partial-postponement.

Only in the case of Detroit is there a lack of neat correspondence between the view of the child and the level of postponement of formal reading instruction. Although the Detroit guide apparently regards the child from a maturational stance, it does not strongly favor postponement. This discrepancy might be explained by Detroit's recent shift toward some formal instruction in kindergarten, including some use of SWRL materials (E. W. McDaid, personal

communication, June 11, 1973). Philosophy in process of radical change is likely to exhibit inconsistency. It is interesting to note that, in this case, the experimentation with earlier instruction preceded the change in the view of the child whereas in most other instances of transition the change in the view of the child occurred prior to the experimentation with earlier instruction.

Definition of Reading Readiness

Each curriculum guide was examined to determine its particular definition of reading readiness. One expected to find two primary ways of defining readiness for reading: either the traditional focus on oral language skills or a stress upon initial visual reading skills such as visual discrimination of letters and words.

Six guides--those from Houston, Memphis, Atlanta, Newark, Omaha, and Birmingham--were easily classified as representing the traditional focus on oral language development (see Appendix A, 10). Three other guides--those of Detroit, Indianapolis, and Boston--were also categorized as representative of the traditional understanding of reading readiness; however, these three

guides also include some direct teaching of specific initial visual reading skills in their definitions of reading readiness (Detroit, 1970, pp. 10, 17-19; Indianapolis, 1970, p. 130; Boston, 1969, pp. 90-91). Taken together, these nine guides seem to indicate that the majority of kindergartens still define reading readiness in traditional terms of oral language development.

Of the remaining four guides, Los Angeles is unique in its utilization of both the oral and the initial visual language definitions of reading readiness simultaneously (see Appendix A, 11). The three cities using the SWRL program were easily classified as holding to a definition of reading readiness in terms of initial visual reading skills. The preceding discussion is summarized by Table 6.

Method of Reading Instruction

The various curriculum guides were perused for indications of method of instruction. Three method types were found: large group instruction, individual and

TABLE 6

DEFINITIONS OF READING READINESS

Definitions	Cities as classified by	
	Judge 1 (author)	Judge 2
Oral Language Skills	Houston, Memphis, Atlanta, Newark, Omaha, Birmingham, Detroit, Indianapolis, Boston	Houston, Atlanta, Omaha, Birmingham
Oral Language and Initial Visual Skills	Los Angeles	Los Angeles, Detroit, Indianapolis, Boston, Memphis, Newark
Initial Visual Reading Skills	New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville	New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville

small group instruction, and also a combination of both small and whole group instruction. Table 7 lists these methods and the cities using each type as classified by the two judges.

Three cities--Houston, Boston, and Memphis--were considered to be using large group instruction since the guides from these cities never mentioned individual or small group instruction. However, these three cities do use learning centers which might tend to foster some informal individual and small group learning.

Eight cities stress learning by individuals and small groups. These eight are: Los Angeles (1970, p. 7), Detroit (1970, pp. 1, 9), Atlanta (1971, p. 42), Newark (E.C.E., 1971, pp. 4, 11), Omaha (p. 71), and the three users of SWRL.

The guide from Indianapolis stresses the use of "informal instruction . . . in both individual and group situations [Indianapolis, 1970, p. 130]." It is not clear whether the reference is to small or large groups but the overall traditional quality of the Indianapolis kindergarten curriculum leads one to presume large group instruction.

The Birmingham curriculum guide is so brief, giving only objectives and activities, that no presumptions can be made regarding method of instruction.

TABLE 7

METHODS OF READING INSTRUCTION

Methods	Cities as classified by	
	Judge 1 (author)	Judge 2
Large Group	Houston, Boston, Memphis	Houston, Boston, Memphis
Individual and Small Group	Los Angeles, Detroit, Newark, Atlanta, Omaha, New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville	Los Angeles, Indianapolis, New Orleans, Phoenix District 1, Jacksonville, Atlanta, Newark
Small Group and Whole Group	Indianapolis	Detroit, Omaha
Not Given	Birmingham	Birmingham

From the preceding, one observes that more than half of the 13 kindergartens stress the use of individual and small group instruction. However, only Los Angeles and the three users of SWRL seem seriously committed to small group teaching. Detroit, Atlanta, Newark, and Omaha seem to be giving only superficial emphasis to learning in small groups. Each of these four guides contains sufficiently traditional material that one suspects large group instruction is actually used most of the time.

Materials of Reading Instruction

The thirteen kindergartens were analyzed in terms of materials for use by students which related to initial reading instruction. Seven types of materials were selected for the analysis: the usual children's literature, easy-to-read books, experience charts, audio-visual equipment, writing supplies, commercial readiness materials, and teacher-made readiness materials. Here, readiness materials refers specifically to devices introducing words and letters.

Table 8 presents a list of the cities and the materials cited by each (see Appendix A, 12). From this table

one can see that only one city, Los Angeles, indicates the use of all seven materials. It appears that the Los Angeles kindergartens are the most amply provided with a large variety of materials for pupil use. It is possible that other cities use resources which are not indicated in their curriculum guides. However, this survey is an analysis of materials only as they are mentioned in the guides, not as they are actually used in the classroom.

No attempt is made to rank the quality or frequency of use of a particular material. In some cases it seems clear that a particular resource is used often in an imaginative and productive way. In other cases, the same resource appears to be used infrequently and in a cursory manner. But in most cases it is very difficult to judge the quality of the use in the classroom. Therefore, mere indication of use was adopted as the criterion with no judgments about how often or how well a particular material is used.

A perusal of Table 8 indicates which materials are the most or the least popular. Children's literature, experience charts, and commercial readiness materials are cited as used by at least nine of the 13 kindergartens. Seven, or about half, of the kindergartens report the use of audio-visual equipment and of teacher-made

TABLE 8

REPORTED USE OF READING MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS

Cities Ranked by Number of Materials Used	Children's Literature	Experience Charts	Commercial Devices	Audio-Visual Equipment	Teacher-made Devices	Easy-to-Read Books	Writing Supplies
Los Angeles	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Indianapolis	x	x	x	x	x		x
Boston	x	x	x	x	x		x
Houston	x	x	x	x	x		
Omaha	x	x	x	x	x		
Newark	x	x			x		x
Detroit	x	x	x				
Memphis	x	x			x		
Atlanta	x	x		x			
Birmingham	x			x			
New Orleans			x			x	
Phoenix District 1			x			x	
Jacksonville			x			x	

readiness materials. The least-mentioned resources are easy-to-read books and writing supplies for pupil use.

Table 8 ranks the cities according to number of materials indicated. From this ranking, one can see that Los Angeles is the only city mentioning all seven materials. Indianapolis and Boston are placed next. They each cite six of the seven resources and the same six materials; neither indicates the use of easy-to-read books. Houston and Omaha are next in order, reporting the use of the same five materials; neither mentions easy-to-read books or writing supplies for pupil use. Newark reports the use of four types of resources excluding easy-to-read books, audio-visual equipment, and commercial readiness materials. Detroit, Memphis, and Atlanta report the use of only three resources; neither mentions easy-to-read books or writing supplies. Detroit and Memphis make no reference to audio-visual equipment. Detroit and Atlanta do not mention teacher-made resources. And Memphis and Atlanta do not report the use of commercial readiness materials. Finally, Birmingham and the three cities using SWRL indicate the use of only two materials, a different two. Birmingham mentions only children's literature and audio-visual equipment whereas the SWRL brochure mentions only easy-to-read books and commercial readiness devices.

It is safe to assume that both Birmingham and the SWRL cities use far more resources than Table 8 indicates.

Because elements such as children's literature, experience charts, and audio-visual equipment are commonly mentioned, it is reasonable to assume that Birmingham and the SWRL cities use them also but do not mention them for the following reasons. The curriculum guide from Birmingham is especially brief and does not attempt to cover as much as do most curriculum guides. The cities using SWRL merely supplied an official SWRL brochure and made no attempt to describe other aspects of their kindergarten programs.

The most important finding from this examination of kindergarten materials is the non-mention by most cities of easy-to-read books and of writing materials for pupil use. Nine cities give no mention of writing supplies for students; three of these nine also make strong statements favoring the delay of handwriting until first grade (Detroit, 1970, p. 15; Houston, 1967, p. 109; Atlanta, 1971, pp. 34, 90). Nine cities make no reference to easy-to-read books. By contrast the early reading instruction of the SWRL program emphasizes the use of easy-to-read books. Among other things, the SWRL program uses 52 paperback storybooks easy enogh for children to read themselves.

Evaluation of Reading Achievement

The curriculum guides were examined for information about the evaluation of reading achievement. Table 9 summarizes this data (see Appendix A, 13). From Table 9, one

TABLE 9

EVALUATION OF READING ACHIEVEMENT
IN KINDERGARTEN

Cities Listed by Type Tests Given	Informal Teacher Assessment	Test Information Not Given	Criterion Tests	Standardized Tests
Houston	x			
Boston	x			
Memphis	x			
Atlanta	x			
Newark	x			
Omaha	x			
Los Angeles		x		
Indianapolis		x		
Birmingham		x		
New Orleans			x	
Phoenix			x	
District 1				
Jacksonville			x	
Detroit				x
Memphis				x

Note--Although Boston and Omaha indicate the use of standardized tests, it is not clear to what extent these are used in kindergarten.

can see that six cities indicate the use of informal teacher assessment including such techniques as direct observation, anecdotal records, checklists, and conferences. Three cities give no information regarding evaluation of reading achievement.

Only two cities--Detroit and Memphis--clearly indicate the use of standardized tests. In Memphis, readiness tests are given to all kindergarten children in October and May (Memphis, 1972, p. 28). Detroit administers standardized tests in January of the kindergarten year (Detroit, 1970, pp. 9, 15). Boston mentions the use of a variety of standardized tests but it is not clear whether any of these tests are used for all kindergarteners or only for special pupils (Boston, 1969, p. 172). Omaha also mentions the use of standardized tests in kindergarten but the reference is very brief and later it is clearly stated that a readiness test is given to all first graders in September (Omaha, pp. 53, 61). Therefore, it appears that the two references to standardized testing may be pointing to one and the same occurrence.

The three cities using SWRL are the only ones which mention the use of criterion tests. The SWRL brochure describes the use of Criterion Exercises following each of the ten units to ascertain which skills are not yet mastered. Next supplementary Practice Exercises are provided for individual children who need additional instruction (see Appendix A, 9).

The most important finding of this survey of testing in the kindergartens is the heavy reliance upon informal teacher assessment rather than upon some type of formal test. Too much reliance upon informal teacher observation without the use of something like criterion tests can allow the teacher to ignore the extent to which a particular child is learning specific initial reading skills.

Summary

The most important findings of this analysis of kindergarten curriculum guides are as follows. Only two cities--Omaha and Birmingham--report entire-postponement. More than half of the cities appear to be in transition away from postponement. More than half of the cities favor little or no postponement.

Only two cities--Detroit and Omaha--view the child from the maturational viewpoint primarily. Nine cities consider the child partially or wholly from an interventional stance. Cities viewing children in terms of maturation also tend to favor postponement whereas cities viewing children in terms of intervention tend to provide early reading instruction for some or all students.

The majority of guides define reading readiness in terms of oral language facility rather than in terms of initial visual skills. Presumably the trend toward giving reading instruction at an earlier age will eventually alter this predominant definition of reading readiness.

The entrenched position of this traditional definition of reading readiness is perhaps a major reason for the reluctance to offer reading instruction in kindergarten. Such a viewpoint prejudices an examination of the many successful instances of early formal reading instruction. A prototype of the customary way readiness may be defined in the future might be seen in the manner in which the Los Angeles guide maintains both the oral and the initial visual language definitions of reading readiness. Such a position incorporates the new without entirely discarding the old.

At least nine of the cities mention use of individual and small group instruction. Such method of instruction will naturally foster identification of and direct teaching of children ready to read in kindergarten.

The least mentioned materials--easy-to-read books and writing supplies--are probably the most important materials of early reading instruction. The identification of specific reading readiness skills and the actual engagement of the child in the reading process only can come about through actual pupil use of writing supplies and easy-to-read resources. Durkin found that many children who read early also tended to produce a large amount of writing (Durkin, 1966). Therefore, she gave equal emphasis to writing in her language arts program

for four- and five-year olds (Durkin, 1974-75).

Many of the kindergartens surveyed indicate the use of informal teacher assessment as their evaluative technique. Three guides mention no evaluative process of any kind. Such reliance upon informal teacher assessment or upon no assessment corresponds with the prevalent definition of reading readiness as oral language facility. If readiness is defined in terms of oral language, it is difficult to assess accurately and one must rely upon informal teacher evaluation. Here again an outdated viewpoint impedes change by allowing the teacher to ignore individual children actually learning particular skills pertinent to initial reading.

Only Memphis and Detroit clearly indicate the use of standardized tests. Memphis uses readiness tests twice during the kindergarten year. Detroit reports the use of standardized tests in January of the kindergarten year.

Briefly, most of these kindergarten curriculums are in transition away from postponement of reading instruction. Most guides view the child primarily from an interventional point of view. In most cases, readiness is still defined in terms of oral language skill. Most cities favor individual and small group instruction. Most kindergartens do not mention the use of writing supplies for pupil use or of easy-to-read print sources.

And finally, most kindergartens give no indication of formal testing of specific skills.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The twin purposes of this study were: to ascertain the evidence in the research literature regarding the feasibility of reading instruction before first grade and to determine the extent to which reading is taught early in the 13 large cities volunteering such information.

The research literature provided extensive evidence that reading can be taught before first grade effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, according to the research literature, neither emotional problems nor visual problems are caused by early reading instruction. The Denver project and studies by Durkin offered the most thorough and long-term demonstration of the benefits of teaching reading early.

The matter of when reading training is early has been greatly influenced by the Morphett-Washburne studies of 1928-1930. These researchers concluded that reading instruction should not begin before the child reaches the mental age of 6.5. Despite criticism of this research, the tradition of postponing reading instruction until first grade has been predominant. In New Jersey that

tradition was formalized at one time as one of the State Board Standards for Kindergartens. However, since 1969, New Jersey kindergartens have been allowed to provide reading instruction (see Appendix D).

The analysis of kindergarten curricula from 13 large cities indicated a trend toward less postponement of reading instruction. Seven of the 13 large cities reported little or no-postponement; three of these seven showed no delay at all.

Six of the 13 guides viewed the child primarily from an interventional viewpoint. As expected, these same six cities favored earlier teaching of reading in varying degrees. Only in the case of Detroit was there a lack of correlation between the view of the child and teaching reading early. Despite stress upon maturation, Detroit was experimenting with reading instruction in kindergarten. In this case, change in practice occurred prior to change in philosophy. Only three guides viewed the child primarily from a maturational philosophy; two of these three favored delay of reading instruction.

Despite the indication of a trend toward no-postponement, nine of the 13 cities still defined reading readiness in terms of oral language development. This discrepancy between trend toward no-delay and readiness defined in traditional oral language terms is indication of just how entrenched has been the custom of delay and, therefore, the influence of Morphett and Washburne. The traditional understanding of reading readiness corresponds with the maturational viewpoint which also has fostered the influence of the Morphett-Washburne studies.

Only Los Angeles and the three cities using SWRL demonstrated a definition of reading readiness in visual terms of letter and word recognition as well as actual engagement in the process of learning to read. Boston and Indianapolis indicated stress upon letter recognition but reserved words and early reading for first grade.

One recalls that a major omission in the research literature is the lack of specifics about what constitutes satisfactory initial reading achievement. Morphett and Washburne refer to 13 of 21 steps and 37 of 139 words. Durkin names knowledge of the alphabet and 125 sight words. However, most research studies do not provide

such explicit information. Therefore, programs such as SWRL are especially valuable because of the precision with which initial reading achievement is defined and evaluated.

More than half of the 13 cities, and three in particular, emphasized individual and small group instruction. This stress upon individual and small group methods corresponds with the frequent use of such methods in the research literature. The increased use of these methods especially at the kindergarten level will help to provide the unique methods and materials required by kindergarteners. Moreover, individual and small group methods also will help to focus upon the extent to which particular learners are involved in the reading process.

One of the most striking findings of the study is that the least mentioned materials in kindergarten were easy-to-read books and writing supplies for pupil use. Nine out of 13 cities did not refer to them at all. Such a finding emphasized the uniqueness of the SWRL and the Los Angeles programs which used easy-to-read books. Los Angeles also provided a variety of writing supplies for student use. Durkin found many early readers to be early writers as well. Therefore, her language arts program gave equal attention

to writing and reading. One concluded that kindergarteners are often discouraged from early reading merely by the absence of writing supplies and easy books.

The majority of the 13 cities evaluated progress by way of informal teacher assessment. The SWRL program alone used Criterion Exercises. Detroit's stress upon beginning subsequent instruction where previous learning ended implied the use of some form of checklist though none was mentioned; Detroit's only reference to evaluation was the standardized test given in January of the kindergarten year.

Only the Detroit guide mentioned having subsequent instruction begin where previous learning stopped. The Detroit kindergarten was the first year of an ungraded primary unit.

The lack of stress upon adjusted program in later years is a serious omission by the other 12 cities including those using SWRL. One remembers a critical finding of the Denver study that early learners provided with an adjusted program maintained their lead whereas early learners without the benefit of an adjusted program did not remain significantly advanced. One also recalls that about 24 percent of Durkin's early readers were double promoted at least once in the course of the study.

Briefly, the research literature offered much evidence of the advantage of early reading instruction provided it

is followed by an adjusted program in later years. The guides from 13 large cities indicated a trend toward less postponement and toward an interventional philosophy despite the still dominant traditional definition of reading readiness. Both the research literature and the curriculum guides showed a serious lack of specific explanation regarding satisfactory initial reading achievement and evaluation of same. Most of the 13 cities surveyed also never mentioned certain necessary materials for early reading instruction such as writing supplies and easy books. Both the research studies and the 13 curriculum guides used individual and small group instruction to a large extent.

Implications for Further Research

The benefits of teaching reading to young children may be highlighted by an examination of a training program for older students, 16-21 years old. Job Corps trainees devoted three hours a day for five days a week to academic subjects. Over a three-month period, no statistically significant changes were found for either reading, arithmetic or language. A reference is made to Bloom's indication of the difficulty of overcoming deficits incurred over a long period and occurring early. One implication is that nineteen months, rather than nineteen years, may be more appropriate for compensatory intervention (Kling, 1967). By contrast, one can see the value of early

learning programs, especially for disadvantaged children.

However, further research is needed regarding both early and later reading instruction. The still dominant traditional definition of reading readiness emphasizes the need for more research because this focus on oral language development does not correspond with the research evidence of the advantages of early reading instruction or with the trend in kindergarten curricula toward less postponement.

Future research should be very specific about what constitutes satisfactory reading readiness, early reading achievement, and reading evaluation. The lack of detailed description and of agreement in these matters has been a major shortcoming in the research studies. Emphasis upon such specifics may help to counteract the traditional oral language definition of reading readiness.

Future research should also focus more on the importance to early reading achievement of handwriting and of later adjusted programs.

Subsequent research which attempts to determine the philosophy underlying curriculum should employ more precise analytical procedures than used in this study. And finally, an appropriate follow-up to this study should include a longitudinal survey of curricula and also a comparison between curriculum and reading achievement.

APPENDIX A

DOCUMENTATION FOR CHAPTER IV

DOCUMENTATION FOR CHAPTER IV

1. ". . . emphasis in the kindergarten is given to helping each child: . . . Develop specific readiness skills for reading and mathematics [Omaha, p. 33]."
   "The work period . . . provides opportunity for: language development through listening and talking . . . [Omaha, p. 41]."
   "Success in beginning reading is dependent on the pupil's facility with oral language. . . . children should have many opportunities for oral expression [Omaha, p. 55]."

2. The Birmingham guide lists the following activities for implementing intellectual objectives:
   "1) Conversation and talk
   2) Hear stories and poems
   3) See and discuss pictures . . .
   4) Show and tell
   5) Express ideas orally . . .
   . . . Hear likeness and differences . . .
   [Birmingham, 1972, pp. 3-4]."

3. "Attempts at instruction before this [proper] developmental stage has been reached produce only minimum results and often failure [Omaha, p. 53]."
   "If the readiness program is adequate, children gradually are taken to the place where formal reading begins, thus avoiding emotional problems and reading difficulties which often result when children are plunged into formal reading too soon [Omaha, p. 60]."

4. "A word should be said about the introduction of formal reading instruction at the kindergarten level. There are, to be sure, some children who will have developed sufficient language facility and readiness skills before the end of the kindergarten year. Certainly, children who demonstrate that they would find some formal instruction stimulating and rewarding should be given opportunities to expand their horizons in this respect. Usually, these children will demand to be taught.
   "For most children, however, the kindergarten year should be devoted to developing children's language perceptions and skills. The wise teacher will refrain from exerting any pressure toward formal learning in the area of reading.
   "The kindergarten teacher should consult the school's instructional consultant . . . before initiating formal reading instruction [Memphis, 1972, p. 33]."

5. "In recent years, there has been widespread support of the idea that reading can be taught at a very early age through the use of formal methods with set procedures and materials. . . . For most, the process requires considerable drill, and without a broad foundation of experiences which build meaning and concepts, understanding is lacking and many children lose interest in reading before the skills have been established. This is not to say that reading has no place in programs for young children. Nor does it mean that a child who arrives at school already reading should not be given many opportunities to read as well as assistance from the teacher in refining his skills and enlarging his reading vocabulary [Atlanta, 1971, pp. 89-90]."

6. ". . . readiness grows through the development of the following skills in language arts:

. . .
Recognition of the alphabet . . .
Reproduction of the alphabet . . .
Ability to recognize one's own name in print . . .
Ability to write one's own name . . .
Recognition of some of the child's environmental words . . . [Indianapolis, 1970, p. 130]."

"By presenting the letters of the alphabet to kindergarten pupils in meaningful words and situations rather than in rote sequence, children will learn to accept written symbols and words as natural parts of daily living [Indianapolis, p. 97]."

7. "Provide beginning reading instruction for the pupil who demonstrates readiness and interest [Los Angeles, 1970, p. 12]."

"By removing grade level barriers, the curriculum may be adjusted to the student's developmental needs and abilities [Detroit, 1970, p. 1]."

". . . identify the mature children. . . . ready for advanced work. . . . Some schools exchange a group of children in the kindergarten with a group of children above kindergarten for the short portion of each day [Detroit, p. 10]."

". . . the kindergarten has a mandate for . . . teaching reading to those children who display a readiness for dealing with the reading situation [Newark, R.C., 1971, p. 7]."

8. "The curriculum of Kindergarten II . . . provides the experiences and the skills necessary for success in reading. . . . These techniques should be developed through learnings presented in the following sequence:

The names of the letters of the alphabet
Visual discrimination of . . . the letters of the

alphabet.
. . . the awareness of beginning sounds of spoken words
Development of letter-sound association
Recognition of letters and sounds at the end or in the middle of a word [Boston, 1969, pp. 90-91]."

9. "The program goals are explicit. At the end of the year the children should be able to:
1. Read the 100 words taught directly in the program.
2. Sound out and read new words composed of word elements taught in the program.
3. Demonstrate comprehension of the material they read. . . .

Criterion Exercises for each unit provide the teacher with a means of determining the extent to which children have mastered the skills for that unit. . . .

Practice Exercises . . . provide . . . supplementary instruction for individual children who have not yet attained the unit skills [SWRL brochure]."

10. Those six guides labeled as having the traditional general definition of reading readiness were so classified because of statements such as the following:

"Listening and speaking which are rooted in experience furnish a rich background for later reading and writing. . . . However, no time is allotted during the kindergarten year for the formal teaching of reading [Houston, 1967, p. 93]."

"For most children, however, the kindergarten year should be devoted to developing children's language perceptions and skills. The wise teacher will refrain from exerting any pressure toward formal learning in the area of reading [Memphis, 1972, p. 33]."

"The skills commonly associated with reading readiness are the following: visual and auditory discrimination, ability to note likenesses and differences, ability to listen and follow directions, ability to keep in mind a sequence of events, understanding left to right sequence, interest in books and reading [Atlanta, 1971, p. 90]."

"Readiness for reading is the result of many rich experiences. It is influenced by the children's physical, mental, emotional, and social maturity. . . . A child must understand the language and use it easily in talking with others before he can recognize small visual difference in the printed word [Newark, E.C.E., 1971, pp. 59-60]."

"The right time for any specific learning is when the child is prepared physically, intellectually, and

emotionally for that learning. . . . Some elements of readiness, such as mental age and physical development, are dependent on the process of growing up and so cannot be accelerated. . . . Some factors can be developed through well-planned instruction [Omaha, pp. 53-54]."

"Formal reading should begin in the first grade as soon as a child demonstrates . . . Readiness . . . [Omaha, p. 49]."

The Birmingham curriculum aims "to develop communication skills . . . [and] basic skills requisite for success in first grade" by way of a variety of oral language experiences (Birmingham, 1972, pp. 3-4).

11. "A 'good' program: . . . Recognizes the child as an individual with a unique set of characteristics. . . . The teacher provides experiences and materials that help each child to: . . . Progress at his own rate . . . [Los Angeles, 1970, pp. 1-2]."

"The Teacher Will: Provide a variety of activities appropriate for individual children and groups of two or three. . . . Allow individuals and small groups to explore and learn through experimentation with materials. . . . Allow options and choices for the pupil in the course of each school day [Los Angeles, p. 7]."

"The Learner Will: . . . Develop understanding of direction: right-left, up-down, before-behind, and front-back; transfer these relationships to books. . . . The Learner Will: Develop skill in visual perception: . . . letters of the alphabet; . . . and word recognition and comprehension. The Teacher Will: . . . strengthen the child's ability to hear similarities and differences in letter sounds, in beginnings and endings of words, and in whole words [Los Angeles, pp. 9, 11]."

"The Teacher Will: Plan a variety of sensory experiences which will motivate the child to respond in words, sentences, and stories. Provide beginning reading instruction for the pupil who demonstrates readiness and interest. Help the child who is ready to print his own name and other words which he needs [Los Angeles, p. 12]."

"The Learner Will: . . . Develop the ability to use books to gain information. . . . Begin to transfer his language skills, developed by speaking and listening, to the more advanced skills of reading and writing [Los Angeles, pp. 19-20]."

"The Teacher Will: Provide activities that will create a desire on the child's part to observe, listen, talk, draw, interpret pictures, use mathematical processes, read, and write. Observe and evaluate each child's progress by working with him on an individual

basis whenever possible. . . . Recognize that each child differs from others . . . and that he will respond differently to the experiences and materials provided [Los Angeles, p. 26]."

12. The references for Table 8 are listed below in the order used by the table:
Los Angeles, 1970, pp. 9, 11-13, 19-20, 26-27.
Indianapolis, 1970, pp. 101-143.
Boston, 1969, pp. 23, 102, 114, 166-168.
Houston, 1967, pp. 18, 20, 103, 108-109, 117-119.
Omaha, pp. 36, 38, 55, 63.
Newark, E.C.E., 1971, pp. 8, 11, 41, 43, 47, 60.
Detroit, 1970, pp. 10, 12, 15-18.
Memphis, 1972, pp. 20, 70, 71.
Atlanta, 1971, pp. 31-32, 50-87.
Birmingham, 1972, pp. 4-5.
SWRL brochure.

13. The sources for Table 9 are listed below in the order used by the table.
Houston, 1967, p. 159.
Boston, 1969, pp. 170-172.
Memphis, 1972, pp. 27-28.
Atlanta, 1971, pp. 43, 127.
Newark, E.C.E., 1971, pp. 32-33.
Omaha, pp. 41, 49, 53, 61.
SWRL brochure.
Detroit, 1970, pp. 9, 15.

APPENDIX B

SWRL BROCHURE

THE FIRST-YEAR COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAM

The following information is quoted from a brochure published by the Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development:

The First-Year Communication Skills Program [is] designed especially for kindergarten children . . .

A determined attempt has been made to ensure that the instruction will be pleasant as well as successful. Children are given an opportunity to read many appealing stories and to participate in a variety of instructional games. They are encouraged to demonstrate their newly acquired reading skills at home as well as in the classroom.

The program goals are explicit. At the end of the year the children should be able to:
(1) read the 100 words taught directly in the program,
(2) sound out and read new words composed of word elements taught in the program,
(3) demonstrate comprehension of the material they read.

The program words were selected by linguists and learning psychologists to meet these criteria:
(1) They are common in the vocabulary of beginning school children.
(2) They include a combination of regularly spelled words and high usage function words.
(3) Their component sounds combine to form many additional words frequently used by young children.
(4) Their sound combinations facilitate efficient learning of the word attack process.

The program is composed of numerous materials and recommended procedures for use in maximizing pupil attainment of the desired learning outcomes. The materials and procedures are tools that assist the teacher in developing each child's reading skills. The teacher is encouraged to draw upon these resources to enhance class performance throughout the year using the materials as extensively as necessary to attain success.

Illustrated storybooks relate the antics of a group of animal characters while emphasizing each new word in the program. The 52 paperback storybooks are given to the children to read to their parents at home.

Flashcards are provided for each letter, sound, and word of the program, and may be used in attaining program objectives.

Comprehension exercises, provided in the latter half of the year, offer the children instruction and practice in reading paragraphs and answering questions about their content.

Criterion Exercises for each unit provide the teacher with a means of determining the extent to which children have mastered the skills for that unit. Administered after the initial instruction for the unit, the Criterion Exercise indicates the skills, if any, for which each child needs additional instruction.

Practice Exercises are designed to provide practice on the unit content. They offer an efficient means of providing supplementary instruction for individual children who have not yet attained the unit skills. The Practice Exercises have been developed so that the instruction and practice can conveniently be presented by a parent, pupil tutor, or teacher aide.

The activity sequence is designed to enable the teacher to carefully regulate the amount of material for pupils to master at any one time, and to permit frequent verification of pupil learning. The instructional materials and procedures combined with careful assessment of pupil progress provide the means for ensuring that early reading will be an enjoyable and successful experience for the young child.

The program is organized into 10 units. Previous tryouts indicated that children are able to attain the planned learning outcomes when approximately 3 weeks per unit and 25 minutes per day are allocated to the program.

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Division of Curriculum and Educational Research

5057 Woodward Detroit, Michigan 48202 Phone (313) 833-7900

June 11, 1973

Dear Ms. Wilson:

. . . It is difficult to respond to your question regarding "status of kindergarten" since you have not indicated any of the factors you have in mind.

Do you mean to ask how extensive is the program (i.e. number of classes)? If so, we can tell you that Detroit has about 229 elementary and/or primary unit schools; all have one or more kindergarten rooms depending upon child population. All have certified kindergarten teachers.

Do you mean status in regard to its role or philosophy? If so, we can tell you that it is considered the first year of our nongraded primary units. We believe it provides an important base for all future learning experiences.

Since your thesis title refers to reading in the kindergarten, perhaps we should assume you are referring to its status in our program. If so, we can tell you that it is only within the past few years that most of our kindergartens have turned to some formal reading readiness teaching. Earlier we had a more informal approach which used no reading materials (such as workbooks); instead teachers utilized the "experience story" method and focused upon perceptual development.

The research in early reading, the success of Headstart in Detroit, and our very extensive Pre-School Program persuaded us that children were probably ready for more formalized instruction in kindergarten. Recently we have been experimenting with the materials from the South West Regional Laboratory (SWRL) with some good results.

You have also requested some related curriculum materials. I have enclosed recent items. . . .

Sincerely,

Elmer W. McDaid
Assistant Superintendent

PHOENIX ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

School District No. 1 Maricopa County

125 East Lincoln Street Phoenix, Arizona 85004

June 11, 1973

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Your letter of May 18 has been referred to me by Dr. K. E. Walker, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services.

We have kindergarten classes in Phoenix District #1 for one-half day sessions with all but one of our teachers meeting two classes per day for two and one-half hours each session. These teachers are full-time personnel and share the same responsibilities as the other classroom teachers.

Our kindergartens are academically oriented since we feel that five-year-old children are being denied an opportunity to begin the school learning process with a "sand box/graham cracker" curriculum.

Because we feel this way, we use the SWRL Kindergarten Program which is divided into two parts. The Concept Program begins the second week of school and teaches the concepts of color, size, shape, position, amount, comparisons and pre-reading skills. Beginning about the first of November or earlier, we start the Beginning Reading Program. The Beginning Reading Program teaches beginning consonant sounds and word families (ill, et, un, etc.) which when put together with beginning consonant sounds form words. There are 52 books in the beginning reading program. The children have criterion tests that are used to test them for comprehension and word-attack skills and independent activities for additional instruction. Most of our children, approximately three-fourths of them, begin the first grade reading at a pre-primer or primer level. Because of this dramatic change in our kindergarten curriculum and the results achieved, the first grade program has been completely re-structured. Only those children who have not had kindergarten experience or who are extremely slow are in any kind of reading readiness material at the beginning of first grade. Most of our children go directly into the pre-primers, primer or first reader. We have many of our first grade youngsters at the end of the first grade reading at the third and fourth grade level. The SWRL Program is published by Ginn and Company and was originally developed by Southwest Regional Laboratory in Los Angeles, California.

Our district adopted reading program is the Allyn-Bacon Basal Series. The Phonovisual Products Program is district adopted for phonics.

In kindergarten we teach beginning math concepts not only through the SWRL Program but the Addison-Wesley Primer Math. Consequently, primer math material is never used in the first grade of Phoenix District #1. As you probably know, the primer math is the first 56 pages of Book I of the Addison-Wesley Math Program. In addition to the SWRL Program and the math program we use the Phonovisual phonics materials teaching youngsters beginning consonant sounds. Most of our kindergarten children know all of the 26 beginning consonant sounds and many of them can discriminate these sounds at the end of a word by the time school is out in May.

We began using the SWRL Kindergarten Program three years ago in Phoenix #1. These children are going to be third graders next year. We hope that because of the intensified academic program at the kindergarten level our children will score even higher than they presently do on the statewide third grade reading tests which are mandated by our State legislature.

Our tests results each year are showing a tremendous growth in reading for most of our children. For instance, this year's word attack skill test results for first grade children show a District Mean of 2.5 whereas in past years we were barely able to make grade level.

Because of the SWRL Program we felt that teachers needed some additional activities to use with children. We formulated a committee of two kindergarten teachers during the summer of 1972 to develop a guide of activities to supplement the SWRL Program. Most all of the kindergarten teachers submitted materials that they used in their classrooms and the two teachers who worked on the committee put them together into a Supplemental Activities Guide which was given to kindergarten teachers in the district. This way they shared in each other's successful classroom activities. The cost of the curriculum guide to districts or personnel outside our own district is $4.00.

Under separate cover I am sending you a guide and a bill covering the guide and the cost of postage. We hope that it will be of some help to you in your work on your Master's thesis.

We are really proud of our kindergarten program and invite you or any of your associates to visit our kindergarten classroom and see five-year-old children really reading "reading".

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Marie Atteberry
Kindergarten-Primary Coordinator

APPENDIX D

NEW JERSEY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE: APPROVAL OF PUBLIC KINDERGARTENS

NEW JERSEY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

Before 1969 Revision

(5) A balanced program shall be conducted to meet the developmental needs of kindergarten pupils with no formal instruction in reading, writing, number work, or other similar subjects. Suitable facilities, equipment, materials and supplies shall be provided including movable furniture.

After 1969 Revision

6:26-2.3 Program, facilities and materials

(a) A balanced program in an approved facility with adequate equipment, materials and supplies shall be provided each child.

(b) This program is to be designed to meet the individual needs of every child and may include instruction in reading and other subjects when it has been determined that a child is ready for such instruction by the teacher of the class.

APPENDIX E

LETTER SENT TO 25 CITIES REQUESTING KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUMS

8 Grove Street
Madison, New Jersey 07940
May 18, 1973

Superintendent of Schools
(City Name) Public Schools
(City), (State)

Dear Sir:

I am a student at Rutgers University Graduate School of Education. Presently, I am working on a Master's Thesis entitled "A Comparative Analysis of Kindergarten Reading Curricula in Twenty Large Cities."

Regarding my Master's Thesis, would you be kind enough to provide me with the following information? (1) What is the status of kindergarten in your district? (2) Would you please send me a copy of your Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, particularly as it pertains to reading readiness or instruction?

Please bill me for the cost of the curriculum guide and for postage.

Sincerely yours,

Susan I. Wilson

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COURSE WORK FOR MASTER'S DEGREE IN READING

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

		Instructor
Fall, 1972		
290:501	Introduction to Educational Tests and Measures	Dr. Geyer
299:561	Foundations of Reading Instruction	Dr. Kling
299:564	Remedial Reading	Dr. Zelnick
299:565	Laboratory in Remedial Reading	Dr. Goldsmith
Spring, 1973		
290:514	Introduction to Adolescent and Adult Years	Dr. Montare
290:520	Education of the Emotionally Disturbed	Dr. Piaget
299:566	Seminar in Reading Research and Supervision	Dr. Kling
610:522	Library Materials for Young Adults	Dr. Simpson
Summer, 1973		
290:540	Introduction to Learning	Dr. Montare
Spring, 1975		
299:599	Master's Thesis Research	Dr. Kling

TRANSFER CREDITS FROM DREW UNIVERSITY

Fall, 1960		
301	Philosophy of Religion	Dr. Hart

Fall, 1961

377 Social Ethics Dr. Kelsey

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1967-1972	Supplemental Teacher Chatham Borough, New Jersey
1962-1966	Fifth Grade Teacher Chatham Borough, New Jersey